Female Leaders Mentorship Programme for Co-operatives

(FLEP-COOP Initiative)

In collaboration with

DGRV

Project Overview

FLEP-Coop is a mentorship program for Female Leaders in Co-operative organizations in Kenya.
The mentorship program is an activity under the DGRV* Project in Kenya which is financed by BMZ* from 2024 – 2026.
FLEP-Coop is supported by the State Department of Co-operatives, co-operative organizations around the Country and project partners of DGRV Kenya.
The 1st cohort of FLEP-Coop runs from June 2024 to December 2025.
During that period 12 aspiring female co-operative leaders will be mentored by experienced female co-operative leaders to grow in their roles – professionally and personally.
The mentees, between 18 and 40 years old, were competitively selected on an application basis. They have diverse co-operative backgrounds and are from 6 different parts of the Country.
Guidance for the mentees is provided in monthly mentoring sessions by female mentors who are themselves showcasing success in co-operative leadership throughout their own career paths.

Women Leaders in Co-operatives

The United Nations acknowledge the disadvantages women and girls are still experiencing in personal and professional contexts.
Under SDG* 5 – Target 5.5. the following target is set:
"Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life"
Whilst only 30% of the members in co-operatives are women, the female participation in co-operative leadership is even lower. Research proves that if women have equal access to the resources needed, they produce 20 – 30% more compared to men. Women also reinvest 90% of the money back in society and families whereas men only reinvest about half of that. These effects can be promoted better when women are leaders and enhance their fellowship among women. On community level, co-operatives are great incubators for that.

Objectives of FLEP- COOP

- **Analyze** the factors contributing to gender disparity in co-op leadership
- Identify **opportunities** for increasing female representation in co-operative leadership.
- Raise **awareness** about the various ways women can contribute through active engagement in Co-operatives.
- Facilitate **networking** opportunities.
- Provide a **safe space** for women to discuss their leadership ambitions, experiences and needs.
- Foster discrimination free dialogue between with Co-operative **policymakers** and women.
- **Design** working spaces for women in leadership positions in Co-operatives which combine family and career.
- Building **Leadership confidence** among the mentees.
- **Promote** the social and entrepreneurial benefits an increased female leadership in co-ops has.
- **Articulate** feasible ways to increase women's willingness to be elected leaders in co-ops.

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FLEP Coop Mentee Name: Christine Anyango Obuong

Co-operative / Organisation: Homabay Mentors

My leadership aspirations in the co-operative sector were:

- Help facilitate the voluntary formation and democratic functioning of
- cooperatives based on self reliance and mutual aid for overall economic
- betterment and financial autonomy.

After 15 months in the FLEP-Coop mentorship, I've become confident and
skilled in leadership, teamwork, and agribusiness management. I now see
myself as a changemaker, ready to empower others women and contribute
to my cooperative's growth.

FLEP Coop Mentee Name: Joan Chepkosgei

Co-operative / Organisation: New Kocheng gei Poultry Cooperative Society LTD

Residence: Kapsabet, Nandi county

Over the past 15 months of mentorship, I have grown into a more confident, self-aware, and purpose-driven leader. I serve as a Quality Control and Food Safety Officer at Kocheng'gei Poultry Cooperative Society and have become an active cooperative member with renewed vision and responsibility. The programme strengthened my communication and leadership skills, grounding my work in strategy, service, and my Christian values. Alongside this professional growth, I've also entered a new season in my personal life as I prepare for marriage. Today, I am an empowered woman committed to contributing to a food-secure Kenya and thriving, united communities.

FLEP Coop Mentee Name: Tabitha Waithira Njeri
Co-operative / Organisation: Chai Sacco Society Limited

Residence: Thika

After 15 months in the FLEP-COOP mentorship programme, I am a more confident, intentional, and empowered leader. I have grown both professionally and personally, gaining clarity in my voice as a woman in the cooperative movement and in my ability to create meaningful impact. Today, I lead with collaboration, purpose, and strategy, grounded in my role within my cooperative and community, and confident that the skills, connections, and confidence I've gained will shape both my future and the people I serve.

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CHRISTINE ANYANGO OBUONG

EMPOWERING WOMEN, CHALLENGING NORMS, BUILDING LEADERSHIP

Co-operative: Homabay Mentors Cooperative
Location: Homa Bay County
Programme: FLEP-COOP Mentorship Programme

PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Christine Anyango Obuong is a member of Homabay Mentors Cooperative and a passionate advocate for women's leadership and community development. Through the FLEP-COOP Mentorship Programme, she has emerged as a confident leader committed to empowering women and challenging cultural barriers within the cooperative movement.

STARTING POINT & CONTEXT

Before joining the FLEP-COOP mentorship programme, Christine was actively involved in her cooperative but, like many women in her community, faced deeply rooted cultural norms that limited women's participation in leadership. While she had the desire to contribute more meaningfully, opportunities for confidence-building, leadership exposure, and structured mentorship were limited.

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THE MENTORSHIP JOURNEY

Over the 15-month mentorship period, Christine engaged in leadership development, teamwork training, and agribusiness-focused learning. Through guided mentorship, peer learning, and structured reflection, she gained the confidence to see herself not only as a participant, but as a changemaker within her cooperative.
The programme strengthened her belief in women's potential and equipped her with the tools to mentor others—particularly women who had previously hesitated to step forward into leadership roles.

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Christine describes her transformation as both personal and professional. Through FLEP-COOP, she strengthened her leadership confidence, communication skills, and ability to mobilise teams. Most notably, she has become an advocate for women's empowerment within her cooperative. She now actively mentors other women, encouraging them to believe in themselves, participate in decision-making, and take up leadership roles. Her approach emphasises inclusion, confidence-building, and peer support—creating safe spaces for women to share ideas and lead collectively.

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IMPACT & CONTRIBUTION

Christine's impact is visible in how women within her cooperative are increasingly engaging, speaking up, and assuming responsibilities. By challenging cultural beliefs that restrict women's leadership, she is contributing to gradual but meaningful change in attitudes and practices within her community.

She has also become a role model for balancing leadership responsibilities with family life, demonstrating that women can lead effectively while maintaining strong personal foundations.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE NEXT TWO YEARS

In the next two years, Christine aims to:

- Continue mentoring women using the skills gained through FLEP-COOP
- Advocate for the abolition of cultural beliefs that hinder women from leadership
- Strengthen women's participation in cooperative governance
- Develop sustainable ways to balance family responsibilities and leadership roles

Christine's journey reflects the programme's broader goal: empowering women to lead confidently, challenge norms, and transform cooperatives from within.

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THE MENTORSHIP JOURNEY

Over 15 months, Joan engaged in structured mentorship focused on leadership development, emotional intelligence, and cooperative governance. The programme provided space for reflection, skill-building, and alignment between her professional role and personal values. Through mentorship, Joan not only strengthened her technical and leadership competencies but also deepened her understanding of cooperative development, rural empowerment, and sustainable food systems.

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

- Personally, Joan experienced significant growth in confidence, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence. She became more resilient, adaptable, and intentional in how she communicates and leads. Her Christian values remained central, shaping a leadership style rooted in integrity, empathy, and service.
- Professionally, Joan strengthened her leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. She now engages colleagues, farmers, and community members with greater clarity and confidence, and approaches her work with strategic thinking and purpose.

PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Joan Chepkosgei is a Quality Control and Food Safety Officer at New Kocheng'gei Poultry Cooperative Society and a committed advocate for food security and cooperative development. Through FLEP-COOP, she has grown into a confident, purpose-driven leader grounded in strong values and strategic thinking.

STARTING POINT & CONTEXT

At the start of the mentorship programme, Joan was already working within the cooperative sector but sought greater clarity in leadership, communication, and personal growth. While technically skilled, she desired deeper self-awareness, stronger leadership presence, and a clearer sense of how her role connected to broader community and national goals such as food security.

JOAN CHEPKOSGEI

Leading with Purpose, Quality, and Community Impact

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Leading with Purpose, Quality, and Community Impact

Co-operative: **New Kocheng'gei Poultry Cooperative Society Ltd**
Role: Quality Control & Food Safety Officer
Location: Kapsabet, Nandi County
Programme: FLEP-COOP Mentorship Programme

IMPACT & CONTRIBUTION

Joan's work contributes directly to improved food safety, quality standards, and cooperative performance. She now takes initiative, influences positively, and aligns her daily work with long-term goals of sustainability and food security.
Her leadership reflects the FLEP-COOP vision: leaders who are technically competent, values-driven, and community-oriented.

Female Leaders Mentorship Programme For Co-operatives
FLEP- COOP aspires to enhance female leadership inclusion in co-operatives.
Gender Disparity Analysis
Community Contribution

LOOKING AHEAD: THE NEXT TWO YEARS

In the coming two years, Joan aims to:

- Lead initiatives that improve food safety and quality standards
- Strengthen women's participation and visibility in cooperative leadership
- Champion sustainability through innovation, training, and community engagement
- Advance her professional skills in communication, strategic planning, and project leadership
- Mentor emerging leaders and create pathways for others

Joan's journey demonstrates how mentorship can transform capable professionals into influential leaders driving lasting impact.

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Personal & Professional Growth

- Personally, Tabitha developed greater confidence, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, resilience, and self-discipline. She became more goal-oriented and adaptable, able to navigate challenges with clarity and purpose.
- Professionally, she strengthened leadership and team management skills, professional presence, problem-solving, and collaboration. She now leads with intention, values teamwork, and understands the broader role she plays within her cooperative and community.

Starting Point & Context

Before joining FLEP-COOP, Tabitha was committed to her work but sought greater clarity in leadership, confidence in decision-making, and stronger professional presence. She wanted to better understand her voice as a woman in the cooperative movement and her potential to create meaningful impact.

The Mentorship Journey Point & Context

Over the 15-month mentorship period, Tabitha engaged in leadership training, peer learning, and personal development sessions. The programme helped her strengthen both personal and professional competencies, equipping her with tools to lead more intentionally and strategically.

Co-operative: Chai Sacco Society Limited
Location: Thika
Programme: FLEP-COOP Mentorship Programme

Tabitha Waithira Njeri

"Confidence, Collaboration, and Purposeful Leadership"

Tabitha Waithira Njeri is a dedicated cooperative professional at Chai Sacco Society Limited. Through the FLEP-COOP mentorship programme, she has emerged as a confident, strategic, and purpose driven leader with a strong commitment to collaboration and community impact.

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Impact & Contribution

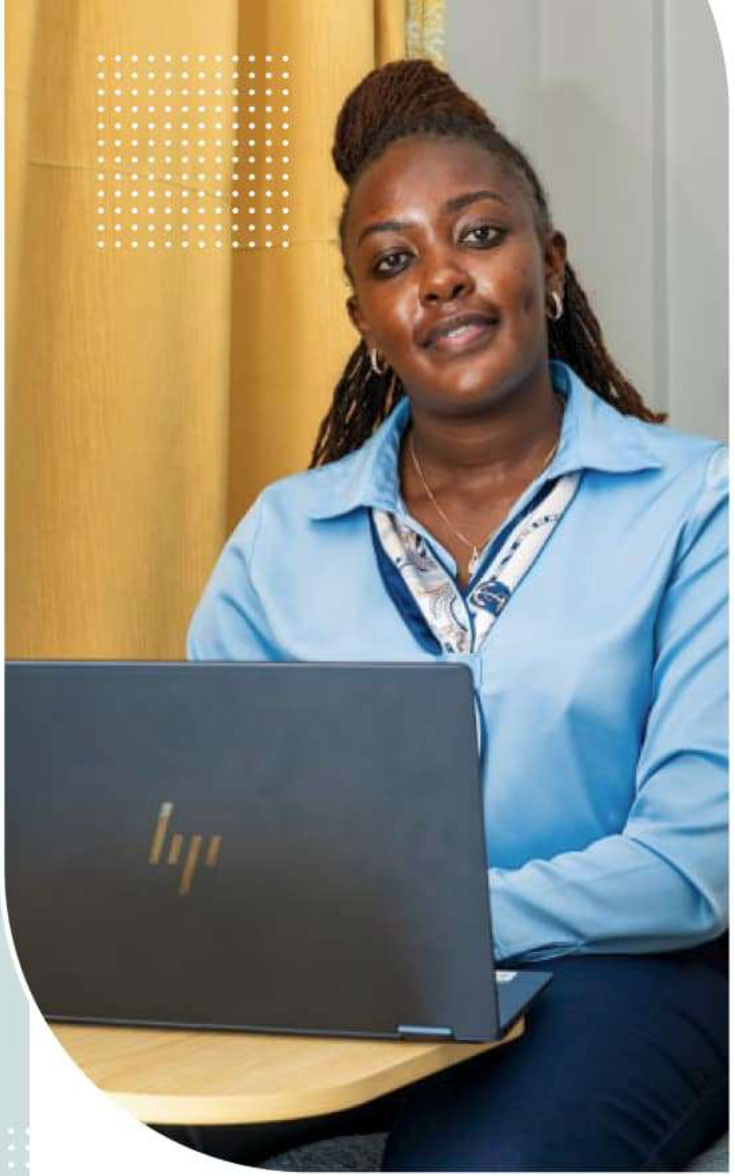
Tabitha's leadership style emphasises collaboration, accountability, and measurable impact. She is increasingly involved in strengthening team culture and contributing to cooperative performance, while also serving as a role model for other women navigating leadership spaces.

Looking Ahead: The Next Two Years

In the next two years, Tabitha aims to:

- Strengthen team performance and organisational culture within her cooperative
- Deliver measurable impact through her leadership
- Mentor others using the approach she experienced in FLEP-COOP
- Advance her education and complete professional certification
- Grow financially and step fully into her purpose with confidence

Tabitha's journey highlights the power of mentorship in shaping grounded, confident leaders ready to serve both their cooperatives and communities.



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The Mentorship Journey

Across five quarters, the mentees underwent a structured leadership development process aligned to FLEP-Coop's core themes.

Leadership Identity & Confidence

The mentees gained clarity on their leadership styles and learned to assert themselves in professional spaces. Confidence emerged as a key outcome, enabling active participation in governance discussions.

Gender Inclusion Awareness

The program strengthened their understanding of gender dynamics within cooperatives, empowering them to advocate for inclusive policies and practices.

Professional Capacity Building

Training in cooperative governance, communication, and conflict resolution equipped the mentees with practical leadership tools applicable in daily operations.

Networking & Peer Learning

Engagement with fellow mentees and senior leaders expanded professional networks and fostered solidarity among women leaders across regions.

Personal Growth

Mentorship provided emotional support and safe spaces for reflection, reinforcing resilience and self belief.

Why FLEP?

FLEP-COOP is the DGRV Kenya mentorship program dedicated to empowering and advancing women leaders in Co-operatives. The program is supported by primary, secondary and Governmental stakeholders of the Co-operative sector in Kenya. We strengthen leadership skills, promote diversity and inclusion, and drive positive change in the mentees and the co–operative organizations and the communities they represent.

Helping Women to Rise

Together with the FLEP-Coop Mentors, experienced female Co-operative leaders, we grant women the support and skills to discover their leadership potentials and navigate through challenging experiences. The Mentees are being equipped with tools to ensure women have equal opportunities in Co-operative set-ups, to advance freely and feel valued in their organizations.

Building more inclusive organizations

Co-operatives are enterprises born in Communities, yet in Kenya they often fail to equally include all members of the society in their membership leave alone leadership. FLEP-Coop is aiming at educating the Mentees about the various ways women can get involved in Co-operatives and influence decision making on community level. We bring female co-operatives and policy makers together to raise awareness about the disadvantages women still experience in Co-operative environments.

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Testimonials

Tabitha Waithira Njeri

Over the next two years, I aim to strengthen team performance and culture within my cooperative, deliver measurable impact, and mentor others the way I was mentored.
Beyond the cooperative, I plan to advance my education, complete my professional certification, and grow financially.
Above all, I seek to step fully into my purpose with confidence, clarity, and intention.

Joan Chepkosgei

In the next two years, I seek to become a more influential leader within my cooperative, advancing food safety, sustainability, and community impact. I aim to be a visible advocate for women's leadership while strengthening my professional skills and strategic capacity. Guided by my values, I am committed to personal growth and mentoring others to build pathways for future leaders.

Christine Anyango Obuong

I want to keep supporting other women through mentorship that have gotten from FLEP mentorship programme,,I shall advocate for abolition of cultural beliefs that hinders women from taking leadership roles.i shall also work on how I can balance family responsibilities and leadership duties.

Conclusion

The experiences of the mentees from Homa Bay, Nandi, and Thika illustrate the transformative power of intentional mentorship. FLEP-Coop not only equipped women with leadership skills but also shifted mindsets, within individuals and cooperatives alike.